

WHEN IN A TRIAL (Part 3) - Acts 16:35-40 – August 17th, 2008

- The Apostle Paul is on his 2nd missionary journey, with Silas from Antioch, Timothy from Lystra, and Luke who was a doctor from Troas.
- When in Philippi they lead Lydia, a wealthy business woman, then, a demon possessed slave girl, and now this prison warden to Christ.
- Though they are experiencing success on this mission's trip, they are also met with unspeakable persecution, and are even imprisoned.

- When reading, studying, and preparing for teaching, I like to inquire of the Lord as to what it is He would have me to learn from the text.
- I believe that God has every word in His Word for a reason. God wants us to know how to handle what this fallen world throws at us.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. NKJV

- The chapter we have before us is packed full of profitable instruction that we can find most helpful when we find ourselves in a trial.
- This is part three of a study titled; "When in a Trial." Instead of reacting in the flesh we can be responding in the Spirit.
- Perhaps this is one reason God had Luke record the details of how Paul and Silas responded to what happened to them.

- The Lord wants Paul and Silas' example to show us, equip us, and teach us what to do when we go through trials and tribulations.
- In part one and two, of our study in Acts 16, we looked at four of these responses, and today, in part three, we'll look at two more.

- 1. Pray and praise God (Verse 25)** - After being beaten mercilessly, Paul and Silas are thrown into prison where they pray and sing.
- 2. Stay until God says go (Verse 26)** - After doors fly open, and the chains fly off, Paul and Silas stay instead of running.
- 3. Lead others to the Lord (Verses 27-30)** - When the jailer sees that they didn't escape, he asks what he must do to be saved.
- 4. Speak the Word (Verses 31-34)** - In response to this, we're told that Paul and Silas spoke the Word to him and his entire family.

5. Be bold (Verses 35-37)

35 When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." 36 The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace." 37 But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? **No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.**"

- v35-36 At daylight, the judge's order Paul and Silas' release, telling them they can leave because they want them to "go in peace."
v37 Instead of just going, Paul boldly refuses because as "Roman citizens" they were publicly beaten then imprisoned without a trial.
- He then demands that they themselves need to come and escort them out of prison because they won't get rid of them quietly.

- Question: Why didn't Paul and Silas reveal that they were Roman citizens sooner?
- Answer: I believe it's because they deemed God's will as more important than their rights and this suffering was God's will for them.
- Evangelism requires there to be a willingness to lay down our lives and our rights for the Philippian jailers God calls us to win to Him.

- Question: Why did they take this posture of boldness and humiliate the judges?
- Answer: I believe it was to protect the newly planted Philippian church by legitimizing it.

Some Christians are puzzled by Paul's actions. Why did Paul humiliate the Roman officials by making them settle the case openly? Paul was simply making use of his Roman citizenship and legal rights to give proper respect to the Gospel and the new church he had just established. Had Paul quietly moved out of town, the citizens would have thought he had been guilty; and this would have hindered the work of the church. No, it is not wrong for Christians to use their legal rights, so long as it promotes the cause of Christ. This official apology and open settlement of the case (for Paul had been deprived of his legal rights) gave dignity to the Gospel and to the church. The church at Philippi was always a favorite with Paul, as you can see by reading his letter to the Philippians. The nucleus of that church was made up of a wealthy woman, a slave girl, and a Roman jailer! But such is the grace of God: Christ takes the weak things of the world and confounds the mighty.

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6. Get back to the church (Verses 38-40)

38 The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. 39 They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. 40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where **they met with the brothers and encouraged them.** Then they left.

- v38 The officers sent to release Paul and Silas report to the judge's who are alarmed to find that they were actually Romans citizens.
v39 They come to Paul and Silas and escort them from the prison, and politely request that they leave the city.
v40 Before leaving the city, Paul and Silas go to Lydia's house where they met with brethren to encourage and comfort them.

- Question: Why did they go back to the church fellowship in Lydia's home before leaving town?
- Answer: I believe it was so they could be encouraged and be an encouragement as well.
- Furthermore, they were going to leave behind this newly planted church, and wanted to do so in the right way.

One has noted how that in Philippi, Paul and Silas left behind two notable converts: Lydia and the prison guard. Each of these two had their lives touched by Jesus in very different ways. Lydia was a churchgoer; the guard was not. Lydia was prospering in business; the guard was about to kill himself. Lydia's heart was gently opened; the guard's heart was violently confronted. The guard had a remarkable sign - an earthquake, but all Lydia had was the move of the Holy Spirit in her heart. Both heard the gospel and believed, and through each of them their whole families were touched!

- Question: Why do we as Christian's have to go through trials?

- Answer: There are a number of reasons for this, last week we looked at a few of them, and today we'll look at a few more.

1. To advance the Gospel

Philippians 1:12-14 12 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. 13 As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14 Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. NIV

2. To keep us from going astray

Psalms 119:67, 75 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. ...75 I know, O LORD, that your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness you have afflicted me. NIV

3. To refine and purify us

Isaiah 48:10 Behold, I have refined thee, but not as silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. ASV

4. To prove us genuine

1 Peter 1:6-7 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that your faith-of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. NIV

5. To comfort others

2 Corinthians 1:3-7 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. 6 If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. 7 And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. NIV

6. To discipline us

Hebrews 12:7-11 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. NIV

7. To become more like Jesus

Philippians 3:10-11 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, NIV

8. To learn His ways

Psalms 119:71 It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. NIV

9. To keep me humble

2 Corinthians 12:7 7 And to keep me from being puffed up and too much elated by the exceeding greatness (preeminence) of these revelations, there was given me a thorn (a splinter) in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to rack and buffet and harass me, to keep me from being excessively exalted. AMP